

An abstract graphic featuring several blue spheres of varying sizes and opacities, some with concentric circles, set against a white background with faint, light blue orbital paths.

# For Orbiting Spheres

**Wednesday October 24, 2018**

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**Alex Pauk  
Founding Music Director  
& Conductor**

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# MUSIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

In programming this evening's concert, I began with Missy Mazzoli's piece as a starting point and added Unsuik Chin's to amplify the theme of how perceptions of the cosmos can be represented in music.

I then thought about what the term 'sinfonia' means and recalled the beautiful, fanciful *Sinfonia* by Tristan Keuris, a piece that we've performed a couple of times in the past. Why not bookend the concert with sinfonias and show two completely different concepts for this form?

Sinfonia: (in the 17th and 18th centuries) an orchestral piece used as an introduction, interlude or postlude to an opera, oratorio, cantata or suite.

So, tonight's contemporary "suite" of pieces has one sinfonia as an introduction and another as a postlude.

Ives' *The Unanswered Question*, the ultimate music in placing listeners at the centre of the universe and creating a contemplative sense of wonder, seemed to be a natural fit for the program. It also happens to be a piece we've performed many times with great affection and impact on audiences.

Welcome to tonight's intriguing musical space as it connects us with mental and physical realms beyond the concert hall.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alex Pauk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alex" and last name "Pauk" clearly distinguishable.

Alex Pauk, C.M.  
Founding Music Director

# ***For Orbiting Spheres***

## **ESPRIT ORCHESTRA**

ALEX PAUK, Music Director and Conductor

**Wednesday October 24, 2018 | Koerner Hall**

**7:15pm**

**Pre-Concert Talk**  
Hosted by Alexina Louie

**8:00pm**

**Concert**

### **PROGRAM**

**Missy Mazzoli**  
(U.S.A.)

***Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)***  
(2016)\*

**Unsuik Chin**  
(Korea)

***Chorós Chordón*** (2017)\*

### **INTERMISSION**

**Charles Ives**  
(U.S.A.)

***The Unanswered Question*** (1908)

**Tristan Keuris**  
(The Netherlands)

***Sinfonia*** (1974)

\* Canadian Premiere

# ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

Alex Pauk, Music Director and Conductor

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*concertmaster\**  
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Maria Pelletier, *alto flute*  
Leslie Newman, *piccolo*  
Tristan Durie, *piccolo*

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Aleh Remezau, *english horn*  
Lief Mosbaugh, *english horn*

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Richard Thomson, *bass clarinet*  
Michele Verheul, *e-flat clarinet*

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Larkin Hinder

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Chelsea Shanoff, *alto sax*

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Christine Passmore\*  
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Robert Venables\*  
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*\*Denotes Principal Player*

# ALEX PAUK

## Founding Music Director and Conductor

Alex Pauk was inducted into the Order of Canada on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. Pauk has revitalized orchestral life for composers across Canada by founding Esprit Orchestra in 1983 and devoting the organization to new music. Through building and sustaining Esprit's high calibre performances, commissioning program, innovative programming (70% Canadian), recordings, outreach projects, national and international tours, and multimedia ventures, Pauk has been a leader in developing and promoting Canadian music at home and abroad.

As a conductor, he attains excellent performances on stage and in recordings. Pauk's commissioning of Canadian composers of all ages and stylistic trends is central to his work. In 2007, Pauk was a recipient of the Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prize, awarded to those who contribute to the cultural and intellectual heritage of Canada. Pauk's commitment to the community through Esprit has also garnered SOCAN and Chalmers Awards, as well as three Lieutenant Governor's Arts Awards. Under Pauk's direction, Esprit was awarded the 2005 Vida Peene Award for excellent standards of performance and programming.

In addition to his work as a conductor, Alex Pauk has a prolific career as a composer, having written music for every kind of performing ensemble. Pauk has composed for and conducted more than sixty works for organizations such as the Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec, CBC Vancouver Orchestra, New Music Concerts, Vancouver New Music Society, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Esprit Orchestra.

Pauk graduated from the University of Toronto Faculty of Music in 1971. He currently resides in Toronto with his wife, Alexina Louie, who is his vital partner in the development of Esprit Orchestra.

# STEPHEN SITARSKI

## Concertmaster

Stephen SitarSKI enjoys an incredibly varied career as a violinist and conductor, and has built an excellent reputation nationally in performances of Baroque music through to jazz and modern. He is also a recognized conductor, adjudicator, music administrator, and teacher. In the contemporary classical music realm, Mr. SitarSKI has been on three tours of the United States with Art of Time Ensemble, the last being February 2018 with singer, songwriter, and guitarist Steven Page. He is also a regular member of Toronto New Music Concerts, Arraymusic, and Soundstreams, the last of which included a tour in May 2012 of Taiwan and China, performing works by Tan Dun and R. Murray Schafer.

As a soloist, Mr. SitarSKI frequently appears with many concertos in the standard repertoire as well as concertos written especially for him by Canadian composers such as Kelly-Marie Murphy and Glenn Buhr. In April 2019, he will perform Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 2* with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, where he also serves as Concertmaster. Mr. SitarSKI is also Concertmaster of Esprit Orchestra, and held the same position with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony (KWS) for 15 seasons (1997 – 2012). In summer 2018, he served as Concertmaster for the orchestra performing the Mirvish Production of *The King and I*. Stephen has also been guest concertmaster across Canada and abroad.

Mr. SitarSKI has also added conducting to his roster of duties, having conducted the Mississauga and Georgian Bay Symphonies. Routinely heard throughout Canada on disc and on live radio broadcasts, SitarSKI has also performed countless television and film scores. Stephen has always maintained a hand at mentoring and teaching; he will mark his 15<sup>th</sup> year on a faculty of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. In recognition of this, he was previously awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal, a nomination submitted by the NYOC. In previous years, Stephen taught at Wilfrid Laurier University, the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music, and the Banff Centre for the Arts.

He is an advocate for the mental and physical health of musicians, and has given talks about the mental strain of a musician's life. He was profiled in the April 2018 edition of The WholeNote magazine.



## PROGRAM NOTES

### MISS MAZZOLI *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)* (2016)

#### *Composer's Note:*

*Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)* is music in the shape of a solar system, a collection of rococo loops that twist around each other within a larger orbit. The word "sinfonia" refers to baroque works for chamber orchestra but also to the old Italian term for a hurdy-gurdy, a medieval stringed instrument with constant, wheezing drones that are cranked out under melodies played on an attached keyboard. It's a piece that churns and roils, that inches close to the listener only to leap away at breakneck speed, in the process transforming the ensemble turns into a makeshift hurdy-gurdy, flung recklessly into space. *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

### UNSUKE CHIN *Chorós Chordón* (2017)

The title *Chorós Chordón* is literally translated as *Dance of the Strings*, though the music proliferates beyond the string section to the full orchestra. The ten-minute work also

carries hints of celestial music with the cosmological theme continuing from Chin's recent *Le Chant des Enfants des Étoiles*. As the composer notes, "physical and biological processes have been a constant source of inspiration, and a number of my scores offer musical and poetic reflections on natural phenomena and our physical relationship with the cosmos."

Program Note courtesy of Boosey & Hawkes

### CHARLES IVES *The Unanswered Question* (1908)

#### *Composer's Note:*

The strings represent "The Silences of the Druids – who Know, See and Hear Nothing". The trumpet intones "The Perennial Question of Existence", and states it in the same tone of voice each time. But the hunt for "The Invisible Answer" undertaken by the flutes and other human beings, becomes gradually more active, faster and louder through an *animando* to a *con fuoco*. "The Fighting Answerers", as the time goes on, and after a "secret conference", seem to realize a futility, and begin to mock "The Question" – the strife is over for the moment.

After they disappear, "The Question" is asked for the last time, and "The Silences" are heard beyond in "Undisturbed Solitude".

**TRISTAN KEURIS**  
***Sinfonia (1974)***

*Composer's Note:*

The composition is written for large orchestra: quadruple woodwind plus two alto saxophones, eight horns, four trumpets, three trombones, two tubas, percussion, piano and string orchestra. The percussion is used in the traditional manner, merely for purposes of accentuation or timbre.

The piece has two movements without a break. The first of these (approx. 10 minutes) consists of several fragments in various tempi, the second forms one whole. The piece opens with a semi quaver figure played by horns and bassoons against chords in the low strings. This "introduction" contains all the material for the first fragment, the overall tempo remaining the same; the harmony develops from the first chord. At figure 12 a short intermezzo begins, with a solo cello, imitated by clarinets and saxophones; the tempo slows

down, and after a cadenza for two piccolos the second fragment begins. Against a background of sustained tones, vivid flashing figures and short solos are heard in constantly changing instrumentation. A brief, rapid fragment follows; it closes the first section and also forms the transition to the second. The second movement is a long coda of final adagio, lasting about 7 minutes. Its nucleus is a constantly repeated homophonous theme in E major, relieved by changing interruptions. Towards the end, solo strings play the theme in canon, but without any contrapuntal intentions. The theme's contours become blurred; the theme puts itself to an end.

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## COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

### MISSY MAZZOLI

b. 1980

As an established composer on the contemporary music scene, Missy Mazzoli's talent draws audiences equally into concert halls, opera houses and rock clubs. Her unique music reflects a trend among composers of her generation who combine styles, writing music for the omnivorous audiences of the 21st century. She inhabits an exquisite and mysterious sound-world that melds indie-rock sensibilities with formal training from Louis Andriessen, David Lang, Aaron Jay Kernis, Richard Ayres, and others.

In July 2018 Maestro Ricardo Muti named Mazzoli to be Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony for two seasons 2018-2020. Recently deemed "one of the more consistently inventive, surprising composers now working in New York" by *The New York Times*, Missy Mazzoli's music has been performed all over the world.

Her opera with librettist Royce Vavrek, *Breaking the Waves*, commissioned by Opera Philadelphia with Beth Morrison Productions, premiered in

September 2016. *Breaking the Waves* was awarded the inaugural Award for Best New Opera by the Music Critics Association of North America. Mazzoli's newest opera *Proving Up* (libretto by Vavrek) premiered in January 2018 at Washington National Opera. Her critically-acclaimed multimedia chamber opera, *Song from the Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt*, has received numerous performances including those by LA Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Milwaukee Opera Theater, and Chicago Fringe Opera. The European premiere was with Musitheatertage Wien in June 2018.

Recent concert projects include *Dark with Excessive Bright* for solo double bass and strings (commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra and London's Aurora Orchestra); *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)* for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, followed by a revised expanded version for the Boulder Philharmonic, *Three Fragile Systems* for Grand Band, *Vesper Sparrow* for Grammy-winning vocal group Roomful of Teeth, *You Know Me From Here* and *Harp and Altar* for the Kronos Quartet; a

piano solo *Bolts of Loving Thunder* for Emanuel Ax; and *Three Arias* for tenor Nicholas Phan.

Mazzoli is currently on the composition faculty of the Mannes College of Music, a division of the New School and a co-founder of Luna Composition Lab. An active pianist, Mazzoli performs with Victoire, an "all-star, all-female quintet" (*Time Out New York*) she founded in 2008 which is dedicated exclusively to her own compositions.

Biography courtesy of G. Shirmer, Inc.

## **UNSUK CHIN**

**b. 1961**

Unsuik Chin has been based in Berlin, Germany since 1988. Her music has attracted international conductors. It is modern in language, but lyrical and non-doctrinaire in communicative power. Chin has received many honours, including the 2004 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition for her *Violin Concerto*, the 2005 Arnold Schoenberg Prize, the 2010 Prince Pierre Foundation Music Award, and the 2012 Ho-Am Prize.

She has been commissioned by leading performing organizations and her music

has been performed in major festivals and concert series by orchestras and ensembles such as the Berlin Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, and many others.

In 2007, Chin's first opera, *Alice in Wonderland*, was given its World Premiere at the Bavarian State Opera as the opening of the Munich Opera Festival and released on DVD by Unitel Classica. Her second opera, *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, is commissioned by The Royal Opera in London for premiere in their 2018/19 season. Since 2006, Chin has overseen the contemporary music series of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, a series which she founded herself. Since 2011, she has served as Artistic Director of the 'Music of Today' series of the Philharmonia Orchestra in London. Portrait CDs of her music have appeared on Deutsche Grammophon, Kairos, and Analekta.

Biography courtesy of Boosey & Hawkes

## CHARLES IVES

### 1874-1954

Charles Ives was a significant American composer who is known for a number of innovations that anticipated most of the later musical developments of the 20th century. Ives began studying at Yale University in 1893 under Horatio Parker, then the foremost academic composer in the United States.

After graduation, Ives became an insurance clerk and part-time organist in New York. In 1907, he founded the highly successful insurance partnership of Ives & Myrick, which he headed from 1916 to 1930. He considered his years in business a valuable human experience that contributed to the substance of his music. Nearly all his works were written before 1915; many lay unpublished until his death. His music became widely known only in the last years of his life. In 1947, Ives received the Pulitzer Prize for his *Third Symphony (The Camp Meeting)*; composed 1904–11).

Ives's works are typically of enormous complexity, freely employing sharp dissonance, polytonal harmonies, and polymetric constructions. He drew from European music

what techniques he wished while experimenting with tone clusters, microtonal intervals, and elements of chance in music. For instance, Ives conceived his *Second String Quartet* as a conversation, political argument, and reconciliation among four men; it is full of quotations from hymns, marches, and Beethoven, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky. His *Variations on America* is the earliest polytonal piece known.

The Ives manuscripts were given to the Library of the Yale School of Music by his wife, Harmony Ives, in 1955, and a temporary mimeographed catalog was compiled from 1954 to 1960 by pianist John Kirkpatrick.

Biography courtesy of Encyclopaedia Britannica

## TRISTAN KEURIS

### 1946-1996

Tristan Keuris was one of the leading Dutch composers of his generation. He studied at the Utrecht Conservatory with Ton de Leeuw from 1962-1969. Keuris then taught musical theory and composition throughout the Netherlands from 1974 to 1988.

His compositions sound organic and harmonic. He once said that he worked "In complexes of atmospheres and colours". He called the form of his works athenatic: "The form is indeed traditional, but regarding their content, my works deviate from that. I know immediately when I've come across a fragment with life in it. I go straight to work with it." He wrote more than 50 pieces, including orchestral, vocal and chamber music. His first success with a wider audience, also internationally, came with his 1974 piece for orchestra, *Sinfonia*.

Keuris composed the expressive *Clarinet Quintet* for the centenary of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw in 1988 and was commissioned to write *Catena* (for Wind Orchestra and Percussion) for the centenary of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in the same year.

Most of Keuris' works are influenced by a mixture of expansive romantic gestures and Stravinskian aloofness, combined with a musical language consisting of exploded fragmented melodies, dramatic harmonic shifts and tightly-knit chords, all dramatically juxtaposed with moments of stillness or

harmonic inertia. Keuris' many orchestral scores reveal him to be a brilliant orchestrator, who enjoyed exploring every imaginable combination of sounds and colours, without indulging in technical superficialities. From the late 1980s, Keuris' vocal scores such as *To Brooklyn Bridge* (1988), *Three Michelangelo Songs* (1990), *L'infinito* (1990) and *Laudi* (1993), proved influential in the development of a richer harmonic language with broader melodic lines. In the 1990s his style evolved to a more overtly romantic expressiveness, albeit still embedded in masterly and brilliant orchestrations.

In 1976, Keuris gained wide public acclaim when he won the prestigious Matthijs Vermeulen Prize for his *Sinfonia*. In 1982, Keuris received the Cultural Award of Hilversum for his *Piano Concerto* (1980) and *The Movements* for Orchestra (1981), which were performed by Bernard Haitink and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra on their 1982 US tour.

Biography courtesy of Donemus Publishing House

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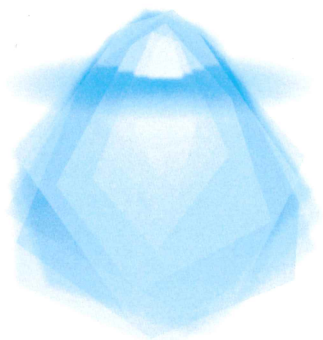
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## UPCOMING CONCERTS



# North/White

**Wednesday November 28, 2018**

**Anna Thorvaldsdottir** *Dreaming*  
**Alexina Louie** *Take the Dog Sled*  
**R. Murray Schafer** *North/White*

# Constellations

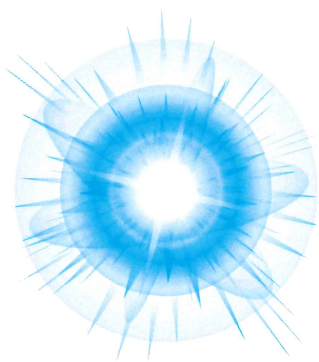
**Sunday January 20, 2019**

**Toshio Hosokawa** *Concerto for Saxophone  
and Orchestra*

**Alison Yun-Fei Jiang** *River Memory*

**Claude Vivier** *Orion*

**Christopher Goddard** *Les tringles des sistres tintaient*



# Grand Slam!

**Sunday March 24, 2019**

**Christopher Thornborrow** *Trompe l'œil*

**Maki Ishii** *Afro-Concerto*

**Unsu Chin** *Cello Concerto*

# New Wave Reprise

**Friday April 5, 2019**

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